



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Administrative Office Building, located at 5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28216 on October 11, 2016 at 6 p.m.

## PRC MINUTES October 11, 2016

### ATTENDANCE

#### **PRC Present:**

Elaine Powell, Chair  
 Kendel Bryant, Vice Chair  
 Tristan McMannis, Executive Secretary  
 Sterling Martin  
 Aubin Guinness  
 Brian Cox  
 Ed Barnhart  
 Heidi Pruess  
 Abe Early  
 Doug Burnett  
 Mary Johnson  
 Michael Kirschman, Deputy Director, Park and Recreation

#### **PRC Absent:**

Tonya Phifer

#### **Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Chair Powell welcomed newly appointed Central 2 Park and Recreation Commissioner, **Peter Engels**. All the Commissioners introduced themselves and the park district they represent. Chair Powell also recognized guest **Alex Cromie** of Playworld.

#### **Public Appearance:**

**Richard Shaw** came before the Park and Recreation Commission to express his concerns of confidence and trust issues regarding the Linda Lake Neighborhood Park. Mr. Shaw stated that if the PRC or Park and Recreation did not delay construction of the park, he would poll the community for a yes, no or maybe and have that vote available at the next PRC meeting.

#### **Proclamations and Awards:** None

## **Presentations:**

### **BK Partners – Brooklyn Village Development Update – Monte Richey**

**Monte Richey** of BK Partners made a presentation on the Brooklyn Village Project. This presentation introduced the development partners and shared the vision of honoring the heritage of historic 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward. Proposed uses includes residential, office, retail, hotel, cultural, open space and parking. The plan also includes a special pedestrian thoroughway called Myers Passage that will connect Brooklyn Village North and South to each other and to bike paths, the Government district, transit, First Ward and more. The presentation can be viewed here: [Brooklyn Village](#)

A question and answer session resulted in the following:

- The developer is obligated to revert to the County the green space/park at the completion of the project. The public would be able to utilize the park, as allowed by the County, for events; including demonstrations.
- The green space of 1.9 acres includes the Myers Passage, which is important to provide connectivity throughout the development and beyond.
- The 1.6-acre minimum for open space was derived from the Spectrum Rezoning Plan, which was an earlier attempt by the County to redevelop the property in conjunction with the BB&T Ball Park and other land swaps. While this plan did not go through, the rezoning was approved and went through a very public and lengthy vetting process.
- BK Partners expressed that while they are not responsible for the quality of life in Mecklenburg County, it is certainly a goal of this project. A presentation will be prepared for the BOCC which will address all the themes gathered from the public input process including the theme for a larger park and park programming. How these themes are balanced out and potentially impact the proposed development requirements can also impact the price paid for the land. The PRC were reminded of two upcoming public sessions:
  - Stake Holder Panels – Wednesday, October 19, 2016
  - Town Hall Meeting – Thursday, October 20, 2016
- The current PRC board was not consulted prior to the most recent RFQ as the previous PRC was involved in the public process of the Spectrum Rezoning Plan. Having been thoroughly vetted, the County felt this was a safe place for setting the minimums.
- The BOCC *could possibly* increase the required minimum space for a park in this development. As this conversation is in front of them, the developer did not have any insight into what that would look like other than financial.
- The Spectrum rezoning petition can be found on [charmeck.org](http://charmeck.org) -rezoning.
- The Spectrum plan presented a larger park of 2.8 acres based on being able to extend onto the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward High School land. The current RFQ specifically said not to program land that the County did not own, therefore the BK development project presented a 1.6-acre minimum park.
- Marshall Park is a 5.5-acre park, however, without the space taken up by the water feature and concrete areas is closer 1.6-acres, the minimum requirement. Opportunity exist for expansion onto the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward site as well as through bike/ped connectivity throughout the Center City and “green streets” to connect all the ward parks and beyond.

- BK Partners was asked to consider what the proper amount of green space should be based on the density of the development.
- The Park and Recreation Commission are unanimous in their position supporting a larger park space in the development. Per public input on how they would like to see the park space programed, 1.6 continuous acres will not be adequate to support desired uses.
- Dennis LaCaria made it clear that quality of life in Mecklenburg County was an integral part of his job description and was very important to him. He expressed appreciation for the position taken by the PRC.
- Commissioner Bryant expressed appreciate for the fact that upcoming public meetings will be more focused on Q&A sessions as opposed to the public meeting on affordable housing and open space which did not allow (in the opinion of the PRC in attendance) for adequate Q&A.
- Commissioner Johnson made it clear that while members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward alumni expressing the fact that they never had a park in Brooklyn Village, does not mean they are against a park in the development.
- Attendance at the Brooklyn Village Development public meetings has been between 20 and 150 with an average of 50 attendees per session.
- Commissioner Cox shared that a lot of the passion for a larger park in 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward comes from dialogue over the past decade that implied a 3 to 4-acre park would be in 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward. This dialogue stemmed from the land swaps surrounding Romare Bearden Park and the Knight's Baseball Stadium.
- There is no precedence of the County selling park land. Sale of the remnant at Pearle Street Park will be the first.

Chair Powell thanked BK Partners and Dennis LaCaria for coming to the PRC meeting and listening to their voices. Chair Powell shared her experience serving on *Connect our Future* where participates discovered that protecting our natural resources, greenspace and parks had to become a priority or eventually there would be no greenspace. She also shared that the three pillars of the Nation Recreation and Park Association are conservation, health and wellness and social equity.

Dennis LaCaria thanked the PRC for their engagement and commitment throughout the Brooklyn Village Development process and for all the time they have taken to work on this issue. He asked for their continued participation to make sure that whatever is built, will be the best.

### **American Legion Memorial Stadium – Lee Jones and Mario Chang**

Lee Jones, Division Director of Capital Planning, made a presentation on the plans to renovate American Legion Memorial Stadium and the partners involved. The presentation covered the following:

- Project goals
- Community uses
- History
- Project site and new master plan for Independence Park
- Widening of the field and preservation of the rock wall
- Improvements to Armory Way Plaza and recognition of all armed forces

- Capacities and space regarding seating, concessions, restrooms, box office, first aid and ADA positions
- Design and construction schedule

Mario Chang, Sr. Fiscal Administrator, cover the cost and financial partnerships as well as the terms of the partnerships and next steps:

- Renovation cost of \$25,030,000 to be shared equally by:
  - Mecklenburg County – Lead Financing Agent
  - City of Charlotte/CRVA – Funding Source: Convention Center/Amateur Sports Fund
  - Queen City Soccer Club – Funding Source: Cash and payments backed by letter of credit from Wells Fargo Bank
- Mecklenburg County will be paid back over 15 years.

Questions and comments resulted in the following:

- Grady Cole will be renovated in another phase but will continue to operate during the renovation of the stadium.
- The backside of Armory Way will have restrooms, concession booths and a food truck area. In addition, the circulation in the area will be changed to enhance the quality of the greenway experience.
- The renovation will include some type of tribute to each branch of the armed forces.
- The stadium will always be known as American Legion Memorial Stadium according to the interlocal agreement when the stadium transferred from the City to the County.
- Queen City Soccer has secured a letter of credit for their investment portion.
- Initial plans for renovation began in 2009 but there was no funding. With the partnerships that have come forward, the renovation has been enhanced. Next steps include hiring a consultant to develop a plan based on the concept presented.
- Renovation has always been in the 30-year CNA but because partnerships presented themselves, the County is leveraging this opportunity to move forward with the renovation. This project is not moving another project out of que.
- The Department will look at a comprehensive master plan that would include Independence Park, Memorial Stadium and Little Sugar Creek Greenway.
- The renovation will be designed to support adding a second tier of seating.
- The turf will be synthetic.

This presentation can be viewed here: [American Legion Memorial Stadium](#)

**Advisory Council Appointments/Reappointments:** None

### **Director's Report:**

Deputy Director, Michael Kirschman reported on the following:

**Pearle Street Park:** The BOCC voted unanimously to move forward with the project which now includes parking and the loss of only approximately 1/10 of one acre following the land swap with the Charlotte Housing Authority and the Baxter Street Park. The park will be a better more usable space than ever before. (Note: at this point, the Charlotte Housing Authority has not yet been given permission to move forward with the land swap, but there is no indication that this will not happen.)

The County Manager will have the authority to sell any remnants of Baxter Street Park, following the land swap, that the Charlotte Housing Authority does not wish to purchase.

**NRPA Conference:** Several staff attended the NRPA Conference in St. Louis, MO. Tours were taken of Regional Recreation Centers.

**NCRPA Conference:** PRC were invited to attend this conference to be held in Charlotte October 24 – 27.

**New PRC Orientation:** There will be a new PRC orientation held on November 2<sup>nd</sup> from 8:30 to 10:30. This orientation will take place at the Park and Recreation Administrative Office Building. Current PRC were invited to attend.

**Updated Community Survey Results:** A new community survey has been completed and the results will be shared at the next PRC meeting in November.

### **PRC Chair Report:**

Chair Powell asked the PRC for feedback on the Brooklyn Village Development presentation.

Commissioner Pruess felt it was positive that the County Manager, Dena Diorio, was present for the Brooklyn Village presentation. She also felt it important for as many PRC as possible to attend the final public meetings.

Commissioner Barnhart suggested the PRC write another position statement regarding the size of the park to reiterate the PRC's stand for a larger park in 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward. Discussion followed and concluded that the main point of another letter should be that a larger park is needed to meet the programming needs of citizens as expressed in the public meetings. Chair Powell made it clear that another letter would require unanimous support and participation from all PRC.

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Barnhart to write a new position statement regarding a 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward park, which was seconded by Commissioner Burnett and approved unanimously. (**Note:** Due to lack of full PRC support and participation, this letter was not written.)

### **Consent Items**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner McMannis to approve all consent items, including the Park and Recreation Commission meeting minutes of September 13, 2016, which was seconded by Commissioner Barnhart, and approved unanimously.

### **PRC Reports and Requests**

Commissioner Barnhart: The South AC Council will be participating in a volunteer project at Davie Park on Saturday, October 15, 2016.

Commissioner Pruess: Reminded PRC of the Partners for Parks annual awards event on October 12, 2016.

Commissioner Powell: Shared that she has been meeting with the Department of Agriculture and Interior to learn how they protect and preserve land.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.